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ABSTRACT

The annotated bibliography examines parental involvement in special education. Citations are presented and information examined for eight topic areas: (1) legal rights, (2) theoretical models, (3) parental-school relations, (4) mainstreaming, (5) training, (6) counseling, (7) consumer perspectives, and (8) bibliographies. Entries include general information on parent-school rights and responsibilites while others focus on practical approaches to fostering parent involvement. Some touch upon issues concerning minority parents. Conclusions note the lack of data-based theoretical information and assert that such data are necessary for further policy and practice improvements. (CL)

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS

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Introduction

Parental involvement has been widely recognized by experts as a criterion for effective programming for handicapped children. Because parents are seen as the primary agents of change in their child's life, parents play a vital role in determining the gains made and maintained by the child.

Given this rationale, current legal mandates, educational placement procedures, mainstreaming, and a trend toward consumer involvement have attempted to motivate parents to become key participants in educational decision-making. Minority parents represent a special case in the educator's efforts to involve parents. Traditionally, minority parents have been excluded from the educational assessment, planning, and placement of their children because of a language communication barrier, indifference, a different value system, and a number of socioeconomic problems which prevented involvement. Interestingly, the historical perspective and feelings of many Hispanic parents have been that the sole educational responsibility lies with the teacher. Many lower socioeconomic parents have viewed the school and educational system as a reminder of their first failure in a life besieged with downfalls. In addition, minority parents, in the past, have been vulnerable to an educational system which overincluded their children in classes for the mentally retarded because of a different language, biased test assessment, and prejudice.

With the advent of the civil rights movement and an acute awareness of human dignity and justice, minority parents became vocal in demanding policies and procedures to ensure adequate and appropriate educational opportunities for their handicapped children. Responsive to the demands of these parents and to the educational needs of their children was a piece of federal

legislation introduced in 1975. The Education for all Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) mandates that parents must be involved in the educational decision-making regarding their handicapped child. This legislation ushered in an awareness through a body of literature typically in support of parent participation in the development of educational programming for the minority handicapped child.

The term parental involvement in the literature incorporates many fairly diverse areas which relate the parents to the school arena. The disparity among definitions in the literature for parental involvement is also reflected in the empirical literature. The research of this topic is marshalled by a variety of concepts of parental involvement, ranging from the parent's influence in the child's academic performance to global characteristics in Mexican-American families. Specific to the literature reviewed is parental participation in educational assessment, placement, and instruction of their handicapped child. Some articles delineate parental-school rights and responsibilities while others offer a more specific "how-to" approach for motivating parents to take an active role in the handicapped child's program.

This lack of cohesion in the research may be explained by the recent emergence of parental involvement as a topic and the dearth of investigations contributing to an identifiable body of knowledge. This review of literature pertaining to parental involvement broaches the following topical areas:

1. Legal Rights
2. Theoretical Models
3. Parental-School Relations
4. Mainstreaming
5. Training
6. Counseling

7. Consumer Perspectives

8. Bibliographies

Because of the dearth of empirical-based knowledge, only five data-based studies were reviewed. These studies examined a variety of perspectives regarding parents of handicapped children, such as: (a) the parent's influence in the scholastic outcome of the Hispanic child, (b) family characteristics of Mexican-Americans with handicapped children as differentiated from families with non-handicapped children, (c) the frequency of interactions between mothers of handicapped children versus mothers of nonhandicapped children, (d) the readability of P.L. 94-142, and (e) salient factors in the parent's selections of a pre-school. What is reflected in this extant empirical literature is the need for investigations which form a basis for further research building on a single conceptual theme. These five studies represent the incipient stages for a growing pyramid of scientific knowledge needed to counsel and know minority parents of handicapped children.

1. Legal Rights

Martin, A. (1979). Educating handicapped children: The legal mandate. Champaign, IL: Research Press. 181 pp.

Martin reviews the legal requirements governing educational services for handicapped children. Tracing the history of legislation for the handicapped, Martin shows that most handicapped children were excluded from public education until a decade ago. Lacking an avenue for advocacy, complaints of this minority fell on deaf ears because they were viewed as having no rights. However, in the last decade, federal courts began to require "due process" rights for these individuals. States must follow certain legal procedures before restricting such civil liberties as placing children in institutions. This legislative prologue had significant impact for the handicapped because it resulted in getting handicapped clients into the courtroom.

Martin further chronicles the landmark cases affecting education for those with special needs. Representative of these legal turning points is the

1971 case of Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This court decision assured access to public schools for the retarded and began to reverse the common belief that educational benefits could be denied to handicapped children. In 1972, the Mills v. Board of Education decision addressed the use of suspension and expulsion to eliminate children whom the school did not want to serve. This decision requires that a hearing take place prior to exclusion.

The most significant educational legislation was introduced in 1975. P.L. 94-142 (the Education for all Handicapped Children Act) charged that schools were to include all handicapped school age children between the ages of 3-21 years in appropriate programs of public education. Schools were given two years to implement the act. Enforcement of the law was to come from two sources: The Bureau of Education for the Handicapped was assigned to assess state plans and audit compliance with these plans; the Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was delegated the function of responding to complaints about discrimination on the basis of handicap.

Martin also addresses the involvement of parents in this legalistic approach to handicapped children. He notes that with the passage of P.L. 94-142 came the requirement that written notice be given before any action is taken in regard to the child. Moreover, the notice must be written in a language understandable to the general public and in a language understandable to the specific parent. This means that the school must be prepared to offer notices in foreign languages. With this legislation, parental consent became necessary in four areas: (a) initial evaluation of the child, (b) initial placement of the child, (c) evaluation before a subsequent change in placement, and (d) before release of records to persons not previously authorized for access. P.L. 94-142 also provides parents the right to request an impartial hearing or to discuss their complaints with a mediator, and details the procedures involved in both processes. The issue of access to school records is also delineated in this piece of legislation, sanctioning parents to access, copy, and ammend records. Confidentiality of records is also assured.

Martin's book is a clear, well-written statement regarding legal policies affecting handicapped children. These policies are explained in understandable, jargon-free language. The book could be strengthened in form by adding more introductory and summative statements to assist the reader, and by eliminating the use of the first person. In terms of content, a more critical approach would be useful to pinpoint the gaps in federal legislation and give direction for future policy-making.

Turnbull, H. P., & Turnbull, A. P. (1979). Free appropriate public education: Law and implementation. Denver: Love Publishing Co. 253 pp.

Turnbull and Turnbull discuss the American legal system as it affects the educational rights of handicapped children. They analyze the current legal status of the handicapped child's right to an education, noting the discriminatory practices historically followed by schools and the federal and state legislation that attempt to correct these practices. Six rights of

handicapped children which form the underpinnings of current federal legislation are outlined. These tenets include the right to: (a) a free appropriate public education, (b) fair evaluation so that accurate placement is achieved, (c) individualized and appropriate education, (d) a least restrictive educational placement, (e) procedural due process or the right to protest, and (f) participation in the educational process. The authors defend these six principles in an explicitly value-laden argument.

Germane to the topic of parental involvement is a chapter which addresses the practice of shared decision-making between parents and educators which is legislated by P.L. 94-142. The implications of this act for public schools, higher education, and the consumer are explored. The consequences of parent participation for public schools are observed in the requirement that state and local education agencies must provide educational information to parents. A second consequence is that two avenues of parent participation have been delineated: parents may represent themselves at public hearings and may serve as members on advisory panels. The implications for higher education in regard to shared decision-making extend to professionals as well. Educators may also participate in hearings, advisory panels, training, and research. The impact for the consumer is related to the evolving partnership between professionals and consumers in the areas of information access and consumer input in decision-making.

This work represents an advance in the literature of special education because it addresses the underlying beliefs and values in right-to-education legislation. The authors also make their biases explicit. For example, they suggest that their motives in advocacy for the handicapped emanate from personal concerns. As parents of a handicapped child, they are active in protecting the constitutional rights of handicapped persons. Turnbull and Turnbull contribute a conceptual analysis of the law and educational practices which adds profundity to a body of literature which lacks analysis at the level of values.

2. Theoretical Models

Baca, L. M., & Cervantes, H. T. (1984). Parent and community involvement in bilingual special education. In Baca, L. M. & Cervantes, H. T. (Eds.), The bilingual special education interface (pp. 213-232). St. Louis: Times Mirror/Mosby.

Baca and Cervantes introduce this chapter by tracing the history of parental involvement in education. Dating back to the 18th century and the birth of the modern education movement, parental support has gained increasing impetus. Support for the involvement of parents has been mounted by the evolution of parent organizations, such as the Child Study Association of America and the Congress of Parents and Teachers at the turn of the century. Parent education programs sprang forth in the 1920s and the federal government began publishing pamphlets which were widely-disseminated on child care. The 1940s further witnessed the popularization of child care through the works of

Dr. Spock. Several experimental programs were implemented for disadvantaged children in the 1960s such as Head Start. Baca and Cervantes characterize the 1970s as the "era of advocacy" as many parent groups voiced their concerns and achieved their objectives.

With this historical perspective as context, Baca and Cervantes develop a model for bilingual families of exceptional children. The framework is modified from the Mississippi Choctaw Bilingual Education Project which successfully interfaced Native-American communities with bilingual education programs. The model is process-oriented and invites the active involvement of bilingual family members in a program. Using the acronym "ATSEM" (from the initials that stand for the five main areas: acquaint, teach, support, expand, and maintain) they describe a five-phase plan designed to accommodate the unique problems of bilingual families. These phases include: (a) acquaintance--a process of involving bilingual family members in activities that enhance the development of the child at home and in school; (b) teaching--a process of teaching family members techniques to teach the handicapped child new skills and behaviors; (c) support--phase in which the family needs emotional, social or economic support and is responded to by support groups or advisory boards; (d) expand--a stage in which the parent feels comfortable in expanding his relationship with the child; and (e) maintain--the final phase in which reassurance is provided to maintain an adequate level of functioning.

Baca and Cervantes conclude by providing suggestions for bilingual parents. They recommend that parents be as fully informed as possible regarding their child's diagnosis and options for treatment. Another suggestion is for the parent to keep records of all contacts with the schools or support services. Copies should be made of all available records. In addition to the recommendations for parents, are suggestions for educators interested in fostering harmony between the schools and bilingual parents. The formation of study groups that focus on the handicapped child, the development of task groups to initiate school-community activities, and the use of advisory groups organized to provide educational services to limited English proficient students are samples of their recommendations.

This chapter is a fairly comprehensive overview of parental involvement in bilingual special education. In addition to the topics highlighted, the authors also discuss the need for parent participation, the rights and services available to parents, and the feelings and attitudes of bilingual parents toward the schools and the exceptional child. The chapter is well-organized topically, although the wording is occasionally awkward and unclear. The recommendations provided are practical and useful for both parents and professionals.

Casuso, V. (1978). Working with families of the preschool handicapped child in Spanish-speaking communities. In P. L. Trohanis (Ed.), Early education in Spanish-speaking communities (pp. 17-25). New York: Walker and Company.

Casuso provides suggestions for how "interventionists" can help meet the needs of minority parents of handicapped children. She defines parent interventionists as teachers, special staff members, or other parents whose focus of intervention may range from counseling to educational instruction to social assistance. Casuso presents the following general guidelines for interventionists to follow:

1. Get to know the unique characteristics of the population to be served. For example, the approaches taken with New York Puerto Ricans may not be appropriate with Southern California Mexicans.

2. Begin work with parents by establishing a positive relationship. This cooperative spirit can be nurtured by getting to know parents as individuals by listening closely to what they have to say.

3. Build understanding of the family's situation by gathering information in the following areas: cultural background, educational level, socioeconomic status, history of parents' contacts with professionals, and reactions of family members to the birth of the handicapped child.

4. Promote positive action through individualized programs that are designed to meet the family's needs, abilities, interests and availability.

Casuso illustrated the use of this format in her work with Cuban families at the Debbie Institute in Miami. With particular emphasis on the information-gathering process, she discussed the cultural context of these families. Many of these immigrants were from the upper or middle classes who came to the United States to escape political oppression rather than poverty. Roman Catholicism is typically important in their lives as well as strong family ties. The roles of men and women are well-defined in Cuban families with the father seen as breadwinner and mother seen as manager of the household and children. The "old-fashioned" Cuban mother is overprotective of her children and would sooner keep her children at home on a rainy day than chance their getting colds at school.

Casuso tempers these tendencies toward generalizations and cultural stereotypes by reminding the reader to attend closely to individual differences. Identifying the unique needs and interests of each family against a knowledge of their cultural heritage assists in the formulation of a positive course of action. Casuso makes an important contribution to the minority parent literature by emphasizing that balance between individual and group issues.

Fantini, M., & Cardenas, R. (Eds.). (1980). Parenting in a multi-cultural society. New York: Longman, Inc. 280 pp.

In this edited book, Fantini and Cardenas review the theoretical and empirical literature on cultural and universal issues in parenting. Included are several chapters that address the parenting styles of different minority groups such as Black, Asian-American and Native-American families. Manuel Ramirez and Barbara Cox present a Mexican-American model of multicultural parenting. These authors question the validity of the traditionnal conflict/replacement model of enculturation which implies that ethnic diversity creates problems for the dominant culture and the individual that only Westernization can overcome. Ramirez and Cox prefer a reconceptualization based on the Mexican-American parenting experience in which biculturalism leads to multisocial identities, tolerance, and the flexibility necessary for successful functioning in a multicultural society. Research and theoretical material are interwoven in this chapter and throughout the text such that compelling questions are raised and addressed.

Fernandez, C. (November, 1982). A theoretical and counseling model for parents of Hispanic handicapped infants and youth. Paper presented at the Council for Exceptional Children Conference on the Exceptional Bilingual Child, Phoenix, Arizona. 16 pp.

Fernandez describes the grieving process for the Hispanic parent faced with the birth and development of a severely handicapped child. She describes various cultural factors which alter the mourning experience, such as the pervasive superstitions, language differences, religious convictions, and use of folk medicine. Based on Kubler-Ross' model of the grieving process, Fernandez provides an alternative framework for the Hispanic parent of a severely handicapped child which takes into consideration these cultural components. The article is rich in its understanding of the cultural differences which impact the parent's experience. Recommendations for professionals interfacing with this group would be a useful elaboration.

Laosa, L. M. (1982). School, occupation, culture and family: The impact of parental schooling in the parent-child relationship. Journal of Educational Psychology, 74(6), 791-827.

The primary focus of Laosa's article is a conceptual and empirical examination of the impact of parental schooling in the parent-child relationship. Laosa presents a complex series of studies which systematically explore this relationship in the context of issues regarding ethnic diversity and individual variability within ethnic group, giving particular attention to Chicano families. In this multivariate analysis, the effects of maternal teaching strategies, parental occupational status, and parental level of aspiration for their children's education were considered. A broad theoretical model is presented that causally links parental schooling, family interaction processes, and children's scholastic preferences. More specifically, Laosa's model introduces family interactions as a mediating

variable between parental schooling and the child's cognitive development. His findings suggest that the academic disadvantage of many minority children may be the result of a lower level of schooling among minority parents. Laosa's work is a scholarly piece integrating theoretical and empirical approaches to the minority parent's involvement in the child's academic success. However, the major theme is cumbersome to grasp due to the number of variables addressed.

Marion, R. L. (1979). Minority parent involvement in the IEP process: A systematic model approach. Focus on Exceptional Children, 10(8), 1-16.

In this article, Marion outlines a model of minority parent involvement and provides a methodical, step-by-step procedure for motivating parents to participate. He prefaces his model by tracing the historical relationship between the minority parent and the schools which was characterized by a basic distrust and unwillingness to cooperate. Marion's 10-stage framework outlines the procedures and documentation involved and the persons responsible for their execution. These steps include: (a) the classroom teacher or principal contacts the parents by telephone, (b) a referral is made to the local support team (LST), (c) the LST is scheduled to discuss the child's educational needs, (d) the parents are invited to attend the LST, (e) the LST confers, (f) the meaning of the LST is summarized and a copy of the summary is sent to the parents, (g) the recommendations of the LST are carried out, (h) the recommendations are reviewed, (i) a referral is made to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee, and (j) the team continues to have parent contact.

Marion underscores the need to educate parents and to provide a comprehensive attempt to motivate parents to participate in the individual education plan (IEP) process. The article provides a systematic framework that is concrete, pragmatic, and useful for Hispanic populations with exceptional children. The article would be strengthened with the addition of a rationale for why the parent's involvement is beneficial to the child.

Sour, M. S. & Sorell, H. (1978). Parent involvement. In P. L. Trohanis (Ed.), Early education in Spanish-speaking communities (pp. 35-39). New York: Walker and Company.

In this brief chapter, Sour and Sorrell discuss the basic components and philosophy of their preschool program, the Integrated Model for Handicapped Early Childhood Development, in South Bronx, New York. The program serves normal and handicapped children and attempts to promote the strengths and abilities of each child. The authors suggest that while the components of any preschool program include education, health, nutrition, and social services, an emphasis on the participation of parents is crucial.

Administering to the needs of parents requires a sensitivity to cultural differences. Although there are more similarities than differences among ethnic groups, Sour and Sorell note some of the special problems that Puerto

Rican families immigrating to New York encounter. Among these are overcrowded, unsanitary living conditions, lack of financial opportunities, and impersonal institutions designed to allay these difficulties. Many Spanish-speaking families respect, fear, and never question institutions. To these families the preschool program may represent bureaucracy and a questionable use of time and resources. In consideration of these dynamics, preschool personnel are selected who are attendant to these issues and whose racial characteristics accurately represent the ethnic composition of the community. Special physical arrangements in the preschool environment are created to present a nonthreatening attitude, such as the addition of a "parent room." This room specifically belongs to the parents and is open all day, every day. An area of the room is designed for children if parents wish to bring other children. The parent room also accommodates meetings and activities which are conducted in Spanish as well as English and houses the holiday celebrations of each ethnic group.

Sour and Sorell suggest that preschool programs provide a variety of options for parent involvement. By allowing parents to select alternatives in which they can succeed, the entire family is supported as well as the handicapped child. Sour and Sorell appear to effectively integrate the elements of an early education program with the cultural components indigenous to Hispanic families. This synthesis makes for interesting reading as well as expanding the parameters of parental involvement.

Tessier, A. & Barton, S. (1978). Parents learn to help themselves--Padres aprenden ayudarse a si mismo. In P. L. Trohanis (Ed.), Early education in Spanish-speaking communities (pp. 27-33). New York: Walker and Company.

Tessier and Barton identify a need for social agencies to value and respect the concerns of families of handicapped children. The role of the Home School Coordinator (HSC) was created to meet that need at their urging, in the Model Infant-Family Project at California State University at Los Angeles. In this chapter, Tessier and Barton outline the function of a HSC in providing support to families.

The HSC role is conceptualized as a consistent liaison between the project and the outside world of services. Primary responsibilities include acting as counselor, social worker, child and family advocate, infant interventionist, and professional friend. The HSC role is unique, however, because of the position on the staff. The input of these individuals is considered as valid as the expertise offered by teachers. Thus, family resources and priorities are as important in developing an intervention as are the specific needs of the handicapped child.

Tessier and Barton delineate the role of the HSC in several intervention settings. For example, in the home, the HSC makes initial visitations to work with the child and provide information on social services. The goal of initial visits is to establish rapport and trust with the family through informal discussion which focuses on the parent rather than on the child. The HSC may then intervene by promoting the parent's understanding of the child's

problem through home instruction and pertinent literature. The HSC may provide social assistance by providing information on community resources and demonstrating how to obtain services.

These authors advance a method of eliciting parent participation in a clinic capacity. Through the role of home school coordinators, they envisage social agencies helping parents to become their own advocates. The authors use case examples of Hispanic families in East Los Angeles to highlight and enrich their description of this form of service delivery.

Turnbull, A. P. & Turnbull, H. R. (1982). Parent involvement in the evaluation of handicapped children: A critique. Mental Retardation, 20(3), 115-122.

These authors question the "conventional wisdom" promulgated by Public Law 94-142 which requires parent participation in decisions concerning the education of handicapped children. Turnbull and Turnbull argue that parents of handicapped children are not a homogeneous group with uniform needs and strengths. Many parents do not want to share the responsibility for decision-making and lack the resources to participate in a meaningful way. An alternative model of parental involvement is advanced which is based on an individualized involvement wherein parents may determine the extent of their participation. The position taken in this paper seems to be an unpopular one given the scope of the current literature. These authors express concern for parents without falling back on the assumption that what is good for the child is good for the parent.

Yoshida, R. K., & Gottlieb, J. (1977). A model of parental participation in the pupil planning process. Mental Retardation, 15(3), 17-20.

Yoshida and Gottlieb review the legal mandates over the past 30 years which affect parent participation in the pupil planning process. Explanations are proferred for why historical attempts to involve parents have been thwarted, such as the lack of clearly conceptualized models that outline how parents may become involved with the schools.

Recognizing this limitation in the literature and in practice, the current article was intended to provide a framework for the classification of parental involvement procedures in the pupil planning process. The model includes a series of stages in the placement process and the degree of influence that the parent may exercise in each of the three stages. The first stage is identified as the input stage in which all information regarding the child is collected. In this stage, the parent exercises his influence by providing information, giving permission, and expressing his/her preference for an educational program. The second stage is the process stage which involves a case conference of the placement committee to evaluate this information. Parents may play an active or passive role in this stage. In the former capacity, parents may exert their influence directly by evaluating proposed placements and questioning their suitability in meeting their child's

needs. In the final product phase, a decision is reached which entails an educational plan and eligibility statement. Here, the parent may accept or reject the recommendation of the committee.

The proposed model is useful as a heuristic for identifying variables related to parental participation. The authors raise some fundamental questions for this body of literature as a whole. They question whether fulfilling legal criteria remedies the initial problems that due process was designed to allay. Yoshida and Gottlieb call for research which documents whether parental involvement achieves its objectives of enhanced student achievement and adjustment.

Luderus, E. C. (1978). A comparison of family environment characteristics of Mexican-American families of handicapped and nonhandicapped preschool children. (Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1977). Dissertation Abstracts International, 38, 7271A.

This dissertation compared the social characteristics of 28 Mexican-American families with handicapped children to 28 Mexican-American families with nonhandicapped children. The Family Environment Scale (FES) was utilized to assess the social climate dimensions of both sets of families. The FES is a 90-item instrument constructed of 10 subscales which measure the relationship dimensions, personal growth dimensions, and system-maintenance dimensions of families. The relationship subscales assess the cohesiveness, expressiveness, and conflict in the family structure. The personal growth subscales quantify the independence, achievement, achievement orientation, and moral-religious emphasis in families. Finally, the system-maintenance subscales evaluate the organization and control in family systems.

The results of this study indicated that families with handicapped children differed in two areas. These families placed less emphasis on intellectual, cultural orientations and on recreational activities in contrast to their nonhandicapped counterparts. The investigator warns that minority families may react to the presence of a handicapped child by withdrawing from outside interests and activities. Luderus provides a comprehensive review which develops the issues from the family literature in juxtaposition to those emergent issues in the literature regarding the Mexican-American population. She also contributes a well-developed rationale for the importance of the parents in all aspects of the development of the exceptional child. She argues that the parent's influence is paramount during the preschool period, because the parents serve as the primary agent for change. This truism is particuarly poignant for families with handicapped children, because the child's handicapping condition limits his/her access to sources of influence beyond the home.

Marion, R. L. (1981). Educators, parents and exceptional children. Rockville, MD: Aspen Publications. 229 pp.

Marion provides an overview of parental involvement in the development of individualized educational programs (IEP) for children who are mentally retarded, multi-handicapped, behaviorally disordered, or abused. Of particular salience is Marion's chapter on minority families in which he traces the historical and social evolution of minority parent participation in the schools. In this sociocultural framework, he identifies several critical variables and events that have shaped the minority parent's perception toward schools and special education. Marion identifies the advent of desegregation in 1954 as a major milestone in this history. Before desegregation, minority parents had their own schools and were active participants. However, as schools became integrated, formerly active minority parents felt alienated as their schools closed. Because of the volatile and sometimes violent nature of desegregation, these parents did not attempt to participate in PTA meetings or other school-related functions.

Another variable contributing to the minority parent's distrust of school systems was the introduction of IQ testing in the 1940s. Intelligence tests were used in schools to separate students on the basis of ability determined by assessments. The belief emerged that intelligence was hereditary and largely a function of race. This belief dominated public opinion and further suggested that minority children were different on the basis of innate intelligence. These attitudes led to a disproportionate number of minority students being placed in special programs for the mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed.

Marion skillfully integrates a theoretical approach to the issues of minority parents of exceptional children with a sociohistorical approach. This integration contextualizes the literature on minority parent involvement and provides a rich conceptual background necessary in understanding this body of literature.

3. Parental Involvement with the Schools

Martinez, Jesus. (February, 1981). Parent involvement: The key to quality education. Paper presented at the Council for Exceptional Children Conference, New Orleans. 11 pp.

The paper describes a program, Project Padres, in Oakland, California, designed to build a working alliance between school representatives and parents of bilingual children. Martinez argues effectively for the need to include parents in the educational services of the child. He suggests that a partnership between parents and educators which enhances communication, commitment, and action can effect a positive climate for the developing child. Martinez appears realistic in his understanding of the problems which prevent cooperative effort. He identifies the dysfunctional communication patterns between parents and schools as preventing effective interaction in which both

parents and school representatives reciprocally blame the other. The tone of the article becomes evangelistic, however, in its attempts to sell this ideal partnership between parents, community, and schools.

Porcella, A. (1980). Increasing parent involvement. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 15, 155-157.

In this brief article, Porcella builds an argument for parental involvement in the education of mentally-impaired children. She discusses the services offered to severely/profoundly retarded school age children and their families through the Exemplary Services Project at Utah State University. This center utilizes parents as trainers to provide a variety of home services with the purpose of stimulating parent involvement. The services offered include training in behavior management and in how to teach children specific skills. Porcella suggests additional ways that parents can participate. For example, a teacher might ask a parent to demonstrate how he feeds his/her child. Porcella suggests that educators must provide a supportive, positive attitude to win the commitment and advocacy of parents in their children's education. Although she does not direct her comments to minority populations, the thrust of the article is quite appropriate to Hispanic families.

Shevin, M. (1983). Meaningful parental involvement in long-range educational planning for disabled children. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 18, 17-21.

Shevin compares a number of models of parental involvement that reflect the varying degrees to which parents can impact educational services for their handicapped children. The first model is that of uninformed consent in which a parent consents to a placement or intervention without having been informed of the risks, implications, and alternatives. The second type is that of uninformed participation in which the parent is given sole responsibility for goal formulation while the professional assists in implementation. A third model is characterized as informed consent in which the parent consents to a program outlined by a group of professionals with a full understanding of its rationale, benefits and risks. Shevin suggests that the best model is one of informed participation in which the professional informs the parent of resources for the child, and the parent participates in goal formulation. He argues that this framework minimizes the conflict of values frequently confronting professionals working with disabled children and their families. For example, a school professional may identify that a child needs particular services, but the professional's role in the institution may prevent him/her from making a referral for that service.

Shevin appears to present an insider's perspective on these four models of parental involvement as he outlines some of the common practices which inform each model of involvement. For example, a frequent situation which leads to a parent's remaining uninformed occurs when a parent signs a form providing consent for an individual educational program while failing to ask questions necessary for full understanding. Shevin contributes a practical

understanding of the problems of parent involvement vis-a-vis a readily understandable conceptual frame.

Hofmeister, A. M. & Gallery, M. E. (1978). Parental involvement in special education: Rights and responsibilities (Report No. A-277). Chicago: National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults, 4 pp.

Hofmeister and Gallery discuss several planning issues that parents and schools must address in meeting their rights and responsibilities. They discuss the issue of school placement focusing on the rights of the handicapped children and their parents, such as the right to free educational and psychological evaluations. They also suggest that parents be critical of any reasons given for why a child was not accepted by a school. They provide examples of unacceptable reasons, such as denying placement because "there is no funding for special programs."

The second issue addressed is that of goal planning. Hofmeister and Gallery point out the responsibilities of educators in developing an individualized education program (IEP), such as requiring a statement of the child's present level of functioning and setting short-term and long-term objectives. These authors offer questions that parents should ask during this goal planning stage, such as how the proposed placement will achieve the desired goals.

A third issue discussed is that of the annual review. Hofmeister and Gallery encourage parents to take an active role in determining if the plan is being carried out satisfactorily. They also suggest that parents can play a vital role in establishing new goals.

A fourth consideration is home involvement. Parents are frequently overlooked as functioning in a teaching capacity, although they play critical roles in teaching their children values and social skills. Parents can be acknowledged in their capacities as teachers in two ways. First, parents can supervise homework assignments to practice previously learned skills. Second, parents can undertake specific teaching assignments, such as tutoring their child in basic self-care.

Remaining issues addressed in this article concern supportive services, extracurricular activities, and postsecondary education. Hofmeister and Gallery advocate that parents express their concerns for supportive services when the child is evaluated for placement. Opportunities should also be provided for handicapped children to participate in extracurricular activities, such as school-sponsored sporting events. At the postsecondary level, disabled persons may have many of their rights protected through legislation. However, Hofmeister and Gallery suggest that parents plan ahead to ensure that the campus of their child's choice has all the necessary facilities to accommodate his/her handicap.

Hofmeister and Gallery conclude that the parents' role in their child's education is enhanced when parents present themselves as self-confident, concerned, and as willing to listen to the child and the teacher. This

conclusion reflects the usefulness of the article. It is written for parents of handicapped children and provides several straightforward suggestions in interfacing with the schools in the best interests of the child.

Turnbull, A. P., Strickland, B. B., & Brantley, J. D. (1982). Developing and implementing individualized education programs. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co. 344 pp.

Turnbull et al. discuss the pragmatic issues of individualized education program (IEP) development and implementation. Included in these issues are the procedural guidelines for IEP development. Turnbull and colleagues discuss the requirements of Public Law 94-142 and the composition and function of the Special Services Committee. The referral process is reviewed, including how parents are notified and consent is obtained. The authors also address the mechanics of IEP development examining the content of the IEP and how levels of performance are determined for the child. An analysis of how annual goal and instructional objectives are set and later evaluated is also included. Functions of the IEP committee and the division of responsibility among members provides another focus in this text. Final consideration is given to the mechanics of IEP implementation focusing on methods of monitoring the IEP and how inservice training is most effectively provided.

Several issues salient to the topic of parental involvement are also addressed, such as how parents are informed of their rights and how parental consent for special services is obtained. Turnbull et al. report on the current status of parental involvement noting that while attendance at IEP conferences is high, the quality of parent participation can be characterized as passive.

The stylistic form of this book is terse and technical. Replacing a narrative introduction to each chapter is a list of objectives. Replacing a conclusion or summary statements is an evaluation which questions the reader on the material covered in the chapter. These stylistic qualities limit the value of the book, making it useful as a reference source only. While it is comprehensive in its overview of issues involving the education of the handicapped child, it is difficult reading.

4. Mainstreaming

Blacher, J., & Turnbull, A. P. (1983). Are parents mainstreamed? A survey of parent interactions in the mainstreamed preschool. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 18, 10-16.

Blacher and Turnbull investigated the extent to which parents of handicapped preschoolers interacted with parents of nonhandicapped children. Using structured telephone interviews, 40 mothers responded to five questons. Questions were aimed at finding out if mothers of handicapped children had

more contact with mothers of handicapped children than with mothers of nonhandicapped children. Examples of this straightforward line of questioning include: "If you needed a ride to your child's preschool tommorrow, which parent would you call?" and "If your child's preschool had a social event, which parent would you enjoy talking to more?" Results suggested that parents of handicapped preschoolers displayed a tendency to interact with equal frequency with parents of handicapped children as with parents of nonhandicapped children.

The issue of mainstreaming handicapped children is given little attention in this article. Although the authors raise questions concerning the attitudes of parents toward mainstreaming and how these attitudes affect parents' interactions with other parents, this study does not begin to answer these questions. The research question asked and the design of the present study are quite simple, which limits the implications of this research for the field. However, the study does represent an exploratory investigation into the effects of preschool mainstreaming on parents. As such, it adds to a more ecological and social perspective on the impact of special education policies and procedures on handicapped children and their families.

Morton, K., & Hull, K. (1976). Parents and the mainstream. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), Mainstreaming and the minority child (pp. 37-52). Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Morton and Hull are parents of handicapped children who address the issues of parental involvement in mainstreaming. The chapter is a personal account of parents' experiences with teachers and educational procedures. It provides a fairly balanced account of both positive and negative anecdotes from the parents' perspective. These authors suggest that the parents who are aggressive in their advocacy for their children are experienced by some educators as nuisances. This attitude toward the parent gets communicated and sets the stage for a relationship fraught with tension. Other educators, in contrast, treat parents as helpful and see it as in their best interest to keep parents informed and their participation invited.

Morton and Hull also offer some useful recommendations for teachers and parents. They suggest meeting parents on their own "turf" which may include home visits. This shift of location provides a more accurate observation of the child in his natural environment, and facilitates the best communication with parents. A second suggestion is for teachers to discuss a child's status in terms of strengths. By focusing on the potentialities of the child in terms of specific skills, the parent is more easily infuenced and communication is again forwarded.

Morton and Hull contribute the consumer's perspective on parental involvement in mainstreaming, an appropriate addition to the literature. Their chapter seems out of place, however, in the context of a book about minority children as Morton and Hull do not allude to minority populations.

5. Training

Jenkins, S., Stephens, B., & Sternberg, L. (1980). The use of parents as parent trainers of handicapped children. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 15, 256-263.

In this position paper, Jenkins et al.°reviewed six models of parent training and parental involvement with handicapped children. Model #1 involves individualized home intervention in which a home trainer vists the home to train parents, family and child. This model is used primarily with infants and preschool age children. Model #2 involves continuous group training which includes ongoing weekly parent training sessions in the school. The content of sessions focuses on classroom activities that are required of all handicapped children. Model #3 involves restrictive group training in which information is supplied in a limited number of sessions. The content of sessions is designed to meet the individual needs of each handicapped child. Model #4 addresses involvement which utilizes parents as assistants in the classroom. Model #5 involves telecommunication training in which parents receive instuctional videotapes that explain procedures for home teaching. Model #6 involves center-based training which is used with children showing serious maladaptive behaviors preventing school attendance. Home trainers consult with a teacher with whom the child will be placed.

Jenkins and colleagues argue in favor of a seventh model, conceptualized as the parent-as-parent-trainer model. In this system, parents of handicapped children instruct other parents to provide educational intervention for their children who are similarly handicapped. In this way, school systems may circumvent staff shortages while providing a needed service. Jenkins and colleagues identify two key personnel as responsible for implementing the program, the parent training coordinator and the parent trainer. They outline selection criteria for filling these two roles as well as the responsibilities for each position.

To some extent, the proposed model represents the ultimate form of parental participation in that parents replace professionals in the education of the handicapped child. While the idea is responsive to current economic trends, it behooves one to question if this is a direction to be fully pursued. The authors fail to discuss the implications of such an innovative system.

Riley, M. T. (1978). Project LATON (parent programming practices). In P. L. Trohanis (Ed.), Early education in Spanish-speaking communities (pp. 41-44). New York: Walker and Company.

Riley provides a descriptive analysis of Project LATON, a program designed to unify the efforts of parents concerned with handicapped children in Head Start. The acronym LATON was acquired to represent the states involved in the project--Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. The program was formed as a response to needs-assessment surveys which

reflected a need for the development of training materials designed to enable Spanish-speaking parents to become leaders in parent activities. The activities in LATON were designed to present training opportunities for parents in the understanding of resources, facilities, educational services, medical terms, and diagnostic procedures. The stated purpose of the project is to educate interested parents to better understand and assist other parents of handicapped children.

The program is built upon the use of bilingual training manuals developed by the author. Riley wrote three manuals which form the basis of modules or meetings conducted by a parent leader for each parent involvement group. The first training manual focuses on mainstreaming the parents of handicapped children in the community and broadening their understanding of community resources. The second volume concentrates on the parent's role as teacher and stimulates the parent to create learning activities in the home. The third manual addresses the mainstreaming of the handicapped child with emphasis on the necessary adjustments by the child and family. In addition to these training manuals, other materials were developed in the effort to train parents as facilitators of parent involvement. Special media productions include the development of a 16mm color film and a 12-module slide-tape to be used by trainers with large groups or conferences. Professional staff are also available to instruct parent leaders and staff in implementing Project LATON activities.

Riley incorporated an evaluation component at the end of each of the three training manuals. Parent trainers conclude their sessions by having parents complete evaluations. Preliminary statistical analyses suggest that the project meets its objectives. However, these results are inconclusive as only descriptive statistics were applied. A formative evaluation is needed to examine the training results of each module and to detect areas in need of revision. Nevertheless, project LATON represents an advancement in the area of parental involvement by applying evaluation methods and developing more scientific methods for preparing minority parents to meet the demands of rearing a handicapped child.

Turnbull, A. P., Strickland, B., & Goldstein, S. (1978). Training professionals and parents in developing and implementing the IEP. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 13, 414-423.

In this paper, Turnbull et al. discuss the content and methods involved in training professionals to develop and implement the individualized education program (IEP). They identify several competencies needed by professionals, such as the ability to communicate with parents about their handicapped child in a sensitive, respectful fashion. Professionals also need to be able to explain federal and state requirements to parents and to inform parents of their legal rights using understandable and jargon-free terminology. Turnbull and colleagues also outline the training strategies used to equip professionals with specific competencies. Included in their methods are small-group problem solving, role-play, encounter sessions, advocacy practicum with families, practicum in schools, lecture and reading assignments.

The article also discusses a similar process in training parents of handicapped children. The competencies needed by parents is quite similar to those competencies required of professionals, since parents participate in many of the same decisions as educators in the actual IEP development and implementation. The strategies used in training parents are also similar to the training strategies used with professionals.

The authors advocate the use of joint training of professionals and parents to expand both parties' awareness of the other's perspective. Joint training also offers the opportunity for parents and educators to initiate a working alliance. Turnbull and colleagues provide a straightforward, comprehensive program for training those involved in individualized educational instruction.

6. Counseling

Marion, R. L. (1980). Communicating with parents of culturally diverse exceptional children. Exceptional Children, 46(8), 616-623.

Marion reports on the elements involved in working with minority parents of both handicapped and gifted children. He discusses the reactions of parents to the birth of their handicapped child. Comparing studies of Anglo American parents to one longitudinal study of minority parents, he tentatively concludes that many parents of culturally diverse handicapped children are not consumed with the same strong negative feelings that overwhelm non-minority parents. Marion also discusses the concerns of minority parents of gifted children, underscoring the issues of testing and identification. Testing has been a recurrent source of friction between the schools and culturally diverse populations which holds true relative to gifted chidren as well as handicapped children. Marion cites several studies which report that many teachers fail to recognize giftedness in culturally diverse children.

Marion calls for recognition from professionals of the special needs of minority parents with exceptional children. Frequently these parents need objective information, such as an awareness of their rights and responsibilities under public law or the expanded definition of giftedness. Marion suggests that the emotional needs of these parents also require attention. He identifies the needs for belonging and positive self-esteem as two areas which teachers and other advocates should address. Although the article provides a broad overview of the minority parent's experience, it suffers from a lack of substance in its generic approach.

Sue, D. W. (1981). Counseling the culturally different. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 303 pp.

Sue provides a broad conceptual and theoretical base from which to analyze cross-cultural counseling. He emphasizes the neccessity of the counselor working with culturally-different clients to be aware of the sociopolitical forces impacting the minority client as well as the divergence of world views among ethnic groups. Sue discusses counseling with specific populations and describes the cultural and historical perspectives in counseling Hispanics. Particularly salient in his analysis is ethnohistory and family structure which forms the context for counseling Hispanic clients. Sue's contribution is meaningful to the issue of parental involvement in bilingual special education in that much of the interfacing between parents and educators is of a counseling nature.

7. Consumer Perspectives

Edge, D., Strenecky, B. J., & McLoughlin, J. A. (1979). Parent involvement: A consumer perspective—in the home and community. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 14, 143-144.

The thrust of this brief article is an examination of ways in which parents of handicapped children can become involved in teaching their children appropriate behaviors. Edge et al. differentiate behaviors into academic skills and social skills. They suggest that parents can aid in maintaining academic skills by becoming familiar with the school's curriculum and working closely with teachers on reinforcing these skills at home. While parents are construed as maintaining an auxiliary function to the schools in academic skills training, parents are seen as having primary responsibility in the teaching of social skills. The problem is that parents are not formally taught how to teach their children appropriate social behaviors.

Edge and colleagues recommend three methods of preparing parents to provide social skills training: (a) Discussion groups provide a format in which parents can share their problems on child rearing with other parents, (b) parent counseling can be conducted on an individual or group basis in which parents can explore problem situations, and (c) systematic parent training teaches parents specific intervention strategies to reduce or increase target behaviors.

The position taken in this paper is that academic and social skills are most effectively learned if parents reinforce them at home. This argument seems intuitive and based on common sense as well as scientific, behavioral tenets. The authors adopt a more risk-taking stance in their prediction that universities will train parent-training specialists in the near future.

McLoughlin, J. A., Edge, D., & Strenecky, B. (1978). Parent involvement: A consumer perspective--in the clinic. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 13, 427-429.

In this article, McLoughlin et al. advocate the involvement of parents in the assessment and remediation of their handicapped children. They discuss three features of parent involvement in clinic practices. First, they suggest that parental involvement may be influenced by assumptions or stereotypes that parents have regarding clinics. For example, many clinics carry the mystique of the medical model with clinicians being cast in the role of dispensing medications. A second feature discussed is one of changing clinical assessment and remediation procedures to accommodate parental needs. During the initial phone contact, for instance, clinic staff can minimize red tape and clarify the type of service offered. A third feature addressed is the recent changes in assessment and treatment practices. A shift has been observed from formal testing to observations in the home and school which makes parental cooperation even more essential.

McLoughlin and colleagues discuss recent modifications in the field of special education which provide new opportunities to encourage parent participation. They address the issues with optimism and enthusiasm. Perhaps foremost in their contributions is that they address the interface between parents and clinics--a connection sorely in need of attention in the literature of parental involvement in the special education process.

Strenecky, B., McLoughlin, J. A., & Edge, D. (1979). Parent involvement: A consumer perspective--in the schools. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 14, 54-56.

Strenecky and colleagues explain several ways that parents of children with special needs can become involved in educational planning and decision-making. First, parents can assist with diagnostic procedures when their child is first suspected of having problems. Parents can supply developmental histories and other information relating to previous psychological, educational, or medical evaluations. Parents should be fully informed of the results of the diagnostic battery. Second, parents can be involved in direct instruction by training them to act as tutors for their children. These parents need to participate in a thorough ongoing training program which focuses on child management techniques, record keeping, and teaching techniques. Strenecky et al. recommend that these training programs be evaluated periodically to ensure that objectives are being met through this forum. A third means of gaining active parent participation is through the use of parent groups. The objective of these groups is to provide parents with a forum in which their concerns can be shared and information about educational programs can be disseminated.

This article effectively outlines how parents of handicapped children can be involved with the schools. The position is argued that parents wield an enormous amount of influence and power which should be used to the advantage of the child and to the advantage of the educational systems designed to intervene with the child. The authors allude to the evolution of an era in

special education which emphasizes the consumer. The article could be strengthened by developing more thoroughly this historical shift toward consumerism.

Roit, M. L., & Prohl, W. (1984). The readability of P.L. 94-142 parent materials: Are parents truly informed? Exceptional Children, 40(6), 496-505.

This study addresses the issue of whether parents fully comprehend P.L. 94-142 which requires that parents become involved in the educational decision-making for their handicapped children. Because most educators rely on printed materials to inform parents of their responsibilities, several samples of these written materials were analyzed to determine readability levels. The samples under investigation were 25 publications from various state and local education agencies. The complete evaluation and individualized education plan (IEP) sections were chosen from each publication for analysis. A computer program using four common readability formulas was utilized in the data analysis. These formulas determined the average sentence length, level of vocabulary, and the number of syllables, words, and sentences in a sample. The investigators found that the mean readability level was equivalent to a sixth grade level. They caution that these materials may require reading skills beyond that of many parents with limited educational backgrounds.

Winton, P. J., & Turnbull, A. P. (1981). Parent involvement as viewed by parents of preschool handicapped children. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 1(3), 11-19.

In this investigation, 31 mothers of mildly or moderately retarded children participated in focused interviews. The interviews were conducted to determine the factors salient to parents in the selection and evaluation of preschools for their handicapped children. Findings suggested that pragmatic issues such as location and convenience were of uppermost concern to parents. A secondary purpose of the study was to discern some of the issues for parents associated with preschool education. A strong need to be relieved of the responsibility for training the child was observed in parents' responses.

Although parts of the article are conceptually confusing, the experimental design appears unencumbered by methodological flaws. The authors also make a point typically overlooked in this body of literature--many parents have a legitimate need to be involved. The authors contribute the parent's perspective on parental involvement as distinguished from the viewpoints of educators and professionals.

8. Bibliographies

Del Green Associates, Inc. (1982). Selected bibliography--parental involvement, bilingual education/special education. Unpublished manuscript. 18 pp.

This annotated bibliography regarding parental involvement in bilingual/special education deals with journal articles, educational documents, books, and pamphlets. As such, it is the most comprehensive bibliography to date on this specialized topic. Topically, the bibliography covers various levels of parental involvement including fundamental parenting issues and interpersonal concerns, as well as legal and political ramifications. The bibliography is organized by type of publication, e.g., journal entry, and provides a highly succinct description of each piece. Evaluative comments and directions for future research would be a useful addition to this bibliography.

Marion, R., & McCaslin, T. L. (1977). Family support counseling for parents of exceptional children: An annotated and categorical bibliography. Austin, TX: National Educational Laboratory Publishers. 83 pp.

Marion and McCaslin provide an annotated bibliography on the issue of parents of handicapped children. Topically, the book covers a wide range of handicapping conditions including learning disabilities, mental retardation, and speech impairment. Also included are categories conventionally excluded in the literature of exceptional children, such as child abuse, death and dying, and sex education while bilingual or minority populations are not considered. The book succeeds in its purpose of providing a comprehensive resource for multidisciplinary professionals involved in family support counseling of parents of exceptional children, because the contents are fairly exhaustive. Annotations are typically descriptive in focus and non-evaluative. The bibliography could be strengthened by a more elaborate preface and summative statements at the end of each section.

Conclusions

Parental involvement has been widely recognized by experts as critical to effective programming for handicapped children. Because parents are seen as the primary agents of change in their child's life, parents play a vital role in determining the gains made and maintained by the child. Minority parents

have felt particularly vulnerable under the current educational system and have been vocal in demanding new policies and procedures to ensure adequate educational opportunities for their children.

Given this rationale, current educational practices have attempted to motivate parents to participate in educational decision-making. A body of literature emerged providing several theoretical frameworks which outlined how educators could involve parents actively in the education process. Several theoretical pieces also provide some conceptual groundwork necessary in contextualizing the minority parent's role in the education of the handicapped child. The social characteristics and parenting styles of Mexican-American families are discussed as well as the cultural components salient in working with Mexican-American populations. The literature also consists of several positions recommending practical avenues for involving parents as tutors and including parents in assessment procedures.

While this literature is rich in providing a variety of suggested means for encouraging parent participation, it is limited in other important aspects. The literature exhibits a dearth of articles which are theoretical in nature and supported by a data base. Fundamental assumptions of this topic need to be investigated; for example, does involving parents in educational processes actually result in improved outcomes for the child as some theories would predict? Investigators need to be critical in their approaches, such as by performing evaluation studies of training programs which recruit parent participation. These data are germane to the formation of public policy which further informs educational practice. The advancement of a knowledge-base concerning parental issues is the next step necessary in promoting better service delivery for minority children with special needs.

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